

500 CE

Oyez, Oyez, Oyez! Let it be known that the first and most famous of all the Merovingian kings was Clovis. He was a great warrior and leader. He conquered the areas now known as France and Belgium. He united neighboring kingdoms and formed the great Kingdom of the Franks. At his death, his four sons divided the empire. Alas, they fought more with each other than they did with outside enemies. Their bitter feuds kept them from the expanding Frankish territories.

**610 CE**

Oyez, Oyez, Oyez! Let it be known that Heraclius was crowned the first Byzantine Emperor. He seized the great city of Constantinople. By the time Heraclius took power, the Persians had conquered most of Mesopotamia and Syria. Heraclius offered peace to the Persians, but they refused. He called together his huge army. He took over the Persian capital city and gained many new lands for the Byzantine Empire.

687 CE

Oyez, Oyez, Oyez! Let it be known that Pepin of Herstal, the great Merovingian ruler, united the Frankish Empire. He became its governor. Pepin built his castle in Belgium. When he died, his son, Charles Martel, took his place as ruler. Known as “the Hammer,” Charles was a tall man and a great general. Martel made an agreement with the Roman Catholic Church, and thus spread the Frankish influence into Germany. When he died, his son, Pepin the Short, took his place as ruler. Pepin was anointed King of the Franks.



Oyez, Oyez, Oyez! Let it be known that Pepin the Short was the father of Charlemagne. After Pepin's death, Charlemagne and his brother divided the Frankish Kingdom. When his brother suddenly died, Charlemagne became the sole ruler of the empire. During his reign, he made the Frankish Empire more powerful. Charlemagne conquered much of France and northern Spain. He conquered Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, and the Lombards in northern Italy. Charlemagne's empire came to be called the “Holy Roman Empire,” even though it did not include Rome! Charlemagne divided his empire into separate regions, and assigned a governor or “duke” to rule over each one, granting them large pieces of land called “fiefs.” Members of Charlemagne's court made sure that these dukes conducted their duties according to the king's wishes.

768 CE

871 CE

Oyez, Oyez, Oyez! Let it be known that King Alfred the Great was one of the greatest kings ever to rule England. He unified the Anglo-Saxon states and protected his people from Vikings who tried to destroy his kingdom. Alfred the Great organized a defensive army and navy. He built many fortresses to prevent further Viking attacks. Let it be known that Alfred improved education. He translated Latin books into English so more people could understand them. He established Anglo-Saxon law and enforced it throughout the land.



Oyez, Oyez, Oyez! Let it be known that Otto the Great was crowned Holy Roman Emperor in Germany. Otto had much influence in the Catholic Church. He used bishops, abbots, and other church officials to carry out his authority. Otto gained land, churches, silver, and gold. Let it also be known that Otto the Great spread his influence through battles. During his reign, the empire grew to include lands that later would be called Germany, Austria, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Belgium, as well as parts of France, Italy, and Poland.

936 CE

1050 CE

Oyez, Oyez, Oyez! Let it be known that the first agricultural revolution began in medieval Europe. As the climate improved, crops could be planted in both summer and winter. To help with their increased work, peasants began to use tools, like a heavy plow and plow horse, instead of oxen. After harvest, four-wheeled wagons helped the peasants to carry more grain to town. Let it be known that this agricultural revolution changed medieval life. The health of the people improved. Towns grew larger. More land was cleared for planting more crops.



Oyez, Oyez, Oyez! William the Conqueror invaded England from France. He was crowned King William I. When he arrived in England, he defeated Harold Godwinson at the Battle of Hastings. During his reign, William made changes to English law and introduced many French words into English. Let it be known that William also introduced feudalism, which created a stable economic and political system in England and France.

1066 CE